



# The hidden lives of artist-teachers in higher education in the UK

Abbie Cairns<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This paper investigates the hidden lives of artist-teachers working in higher education (HE) in the UK through a qualitative study. Using the Artist-Teacher Likert Scale (ATLS), a visual tool that conceptualises the dual artist-teacher identity on a continuum spanning numerical, conceptual, and visual dimensions, this research offers new insights into the identity of artist-teachers in this sector. Originally designed for use in adult community learning (ACL) (Cairns, 2023), the ATLS is adapted here to examine the HE context.

Artist-teachers in HE were recruited via gatekeepers and social media platforms such as LinkedIn and X. Participants, drawn from universities across the UK, used the ATLS to position their current and ideal identities, and were interviewed to explore the considerations behind their placements. Data were collected in 2023 and analysed in 2024.

The findings reveal themes including identity negotiation, definitions of artist-teachers, and time allocation between roles. The paper situates these findings within a literature review and concludes with recommendations for supporting dual professional identities in HE. This work contributes to understanding the complexities of artist-teacher roles and offers practical insights for balancing these identities in higher education.

## Keywords

artist-teacher, identity, higher education, dual identity

---

<sup>1</sup> Norwich University of the Arts, Norwich, UK

### Corresponding Author:

Abbie Cairns, Norwich University of the Arts, Francis House, 3-7 Redwell Street, Norwich, NR2 4SN, UK

Email: [drabbiecairns@gmail.com](mailto:drabbiecairns@gmail.com)

## Introduction

This paper explores the hidden lives of artist-teachers in higher education (HE) in the UK. Within this paper, the phrase ‘hidden lives’ refers to the tensions, challenges, and identity negotiations that often go unspoken or unexamined in HE contexts. This study reveals the struggles artist-teachers in HE face when balancing this dual role, including pressures to align with institutional priorities, issues of professional legitimacy, and the impact of workload on artistic practice. This study is important because it addresses a gap in understanding the dual identities of artist-teachers in HE in the UK. While artist-teachers play a crucial role in bridging artistic practice and pedagogy, their professional identities remain underexplored, particularly in HE contexts. Existing literature has largely focused on artist-teachers in schools (Page, 2012; Thornton, 2013) or community learning settings (Cairns, 2023), but little research has examined how these roles are negotiated in universities, where institutional structures, research expectations, and disciplinary divisions shape professional identity in distinct ways. The study aims to reveal how artist-teachers in HE perceive and negotiate their dual artist-teacher identities, using the Artist-Teacher Likert Scale (ATLS) and to highlight practical implications for institutions and individuals in supporting artist-teachers, particularly regarding time allocation to each identity, identity tensions, and institutional expectations.

This small-scale qualitative study uses the ATLS to interrogate the dual artist-teacher identity in this specific sector. The ATLS was first used with artist-teachers in adult community learning (ACL) in 2022 (Cairns, 2023); this research repositions the tool into a new educational sector. The ATLS is a visual tool used to capture artist-teacher identity on a continuum. The tool's design was informed by the work of Daichendt (2009) and Thornton (2013) and spans teacher and artist identities conceptually, one-to-ten numerically, and blue-to-red visually.

Artist-teachers in HE can be understood as individuals who “work across cultural and creative sectors” (Clews & Clews, 2010, p. 265). HE in the UK can be understood as a provision that is typically provided by universities and other institutions offering degrees, diplomas, or higher vocational qualifications (Office for Students, 2022; Quality Assurance Agency, 2023). Participants in this study are working in universities across the UK.

This paper aims to make visible the identity of artist-teachers in this sector by having participants place themselves on the ATLS and then talk about considerations that led themselves to place themselves at that position within online interviews. Participants were invited to participate in the research through emails to gatekeepers and social media posts on appropriate online communities across digital platforms including LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter). Data collection took place in 2023 and the analysis of the data took place in 2024.

This paper will begin with a literature review that will outline the artist-teacher role in HE in more detail, with reference made to Daichendt (2009), Clews and Clews (2010), Reardon (2008), and Selkrig et al. (2020). The literature review will cover themes including artist-teacher identity, artist-teacher definitions, and artist-teachers and the impact of time, as well as the impact of artist-teacher identity on teaching, learning and assessment (TLA). This will be followed by the methodology and methods section which will outline the qualitative approach used (Denscombe, 2021), and mixed methods used within this for data collection. Here the sample will also be outlined in detail, sharing who the participants are and where they are situated.

The results section will reveal the hidden lives of artist-teachers in HE in the UK. This section explores themes around current and ideal identity, definitions of artist-teachers, and time spent on each practice. This will be followed by the discussion which will consider these points in relation to the published literature. By offering both conceptual insights and practical recommendations, this research contributes to ongoing discussions about academic identity, professional development, and the intersection of artistic and educational practices in HE in the UK.

## Literature review

In HE, artist-teachers are seen as individuals who bring their practical experiences and creative processes into the classroom to enhance their teaching. Clews and Clews (2010) who write on the professional development of teaching creatives in HE comment on the duality of the artist-teacher role and define individuals in this role as “work[ing] across cultural and creative sectors” (2010, p. 265). For artist-teachers in HE, their professional identities are often intertwined, meaning their artistic practice informs their teaching methods, and vice versa (Thornton, 2012); however, those in the role may find that how they identify shifts over time and through their careers (Vella, 2016).

### Artist-teacher identity

Within the published literature, the artist-teacher identity is considered a dual role and is often considered or positioned in a way that shows art practice and art teaching to either be mutually beneficial to each other or as existing within a culture of conflict (Clews & Clews, 2010). Artist-teachers might experience the two existing on the borders of each other (Clews & Clews, 2010) or as overlapping and informing each other (Thornton, 2013). Artist-teachers might find that this dual identity is conflicting, with the conflict between art and teaching appearing within contexts where each role is not supported equally by those around the artist-teacher (Clews & Clews, 2010), something that might be experienced in art and educational contexts. Due to this, some artist-teachers might experience the role as feeling incomplete or without limits (Vella, 2016). This imbalance between art and teaching might occur due to misconceptions about the roles, or differing status between them; however, prominent artist-teacher in HE, Phyllida Barlow states that snobbery around artists teaching should not exist and highlights that teaching is one way an individual might survive as an artist, financially and artistically (Godfrey, 2006). In terms of surviving the artist-teacher identity, Clews and Clews (2010) believe it is important for the artist-teacher to identify with both their artist and teacher roles. In doing so, the artist-teacher must balance the clashing agendas and responsibilities of the artist and the teacher, with preconceived notions that the teacher is concerned with learning (Anderson, 1981) and the artist is concerned with creating (Hoekstra, 2018). Due to these notions, some artist-teachers find it difficult to find similarities between the two often distinct roles (Brown & Korzenik, 1993). However, the artist-teacher must align themselves with the idea that the two roles share many qualities (Anderson, 1981), and inform each other, with artist-teachers in HE often drawing upon their work as an artist to inform their teaching (Godfrey, 2006).

Qualifications might impact how the artist-teacher identifies themselves or how they are identified externally. Engagement with different courses and qualifications comes with its own issues, with teacher qualifications often missing out essential subject knowledge (Clews & Clews, 2010), and artist-teachers who pursue teacher training courses finding they are pushed toward conventional teaching and away from contemporary ideas

(Adams, 2007). However, not all artist-teachers in HE will seek teacher training or formal art training (Reardon, 2008), with this not being a legal requirement in the sector (National Careers Service, n.d), and with those in HE more likely to obtain teaching credentials from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) by demonstrating competencies in their roles (Advance HE, 2023). Beyond teacher training, artist-teachers also face variations in the availability of subject-specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) from employers internally (Clews & Clews, 2010). Artist-teachers in HE feel educated by their colleagues (Godfrey, 2006), showing community as playing a role in artist-teacher identity; thus, working with other artist-teachers is likely to bolster an individual's artist-teacher identity (Godfrey, 2006). However, Selkrig et al (2020) warn that not all artist-teachers in HE have access to this kind of community, with individuals in the role often operating as islands. Perhaps to overcome this, some artist-teachers in HE build communities with learners, who they learn from and work with (Reardon, 2008), to foster a community of artists in the classroom (Hoekstra, 2018).

### Artist-teacher definitions

Definitions of the artist-teacher (Cairns, 2022; Thornton, 2013), and other similar roles including; artist-educator (Daichendt, 2010), teacher of art (Thornton, 2003), artist teacher (unhyphenated) (Graham & Rees, 2014), and teaching-artist (Jaffe et al, 2013; Ulvund, 2015), are available within the published literature; these might be less or more suitable for artist-teachers in HE in the UK depending on the contexts in which they were formulated and published (Cairns, 2022). This literature review will next consider seven definitions and understandings of the role across different contexts spanning from history to 2022.

Daichendt (2010) draws on historical threads to define the artist-teacher as a master for learners, or apprentices, to learn from. Artist-teacher is a term used dating back to at least 1845 (Daichendt, 2011), but a practice that played back through the Greeks, Romans, and Middle Ages (Daichendt, 2010). This understanding of the artist-teacher exists as a means to pass down practical knowledge, with the master viewed as a craftsperson first, and then as a mentor and teacher (2010). Thornton (2003) understood the dual role differently, placing the emphasis first on the teacher role, and then on the artist role, going as far as to state that the individual may not have an active art practice at all. Written from a secondary school perspective, Thornton (2003) makes clear references to the financial implications of both teaching and art and the role this plays on identity. As Thornton's (2013) work develops he provides a second understanding of the artist-teacher role, this time focusing on those who are actively engaged and devoted to both art and teaching across the compulsory education landscape. In the same year, Jaffe et al. (2013) provided a comparative understanding aimed at those working across several education settings. This work again has a focus on helping learners with their art practices, rather than on the artist-teachers' art practice. Graham and Rees (2014) who write from a school perspective, outline the artist-teacher as a dual citizen and particularly focus on issues with duality, including how one splits their time between two contexts. They discuss the dual role in terms of being both interconnected and fragile and the conflict between experiencing teaching as being both a rewarding career and something that undermines their art practice. Ulvund's (2015) understanding of the role comes from a United States context and has a particular focus on individuals having certain competencies that allow them to work across settings. Ulvund's work often refers to settings that exist outside of state education, including clubs, hospitals, and retirement homes.

## Artist-teachers and time

Artist-teacher identity and definitions related to the role often make direct reference to time. Time for the artist-teacher can be a divisive topic, as dual professionals' artist-teachers have the same amount of time as others to complete twice as many roles, responsibilities, and commitments that come from both art and teaching. For the artist-teacher in HE, additional commitments from the institution might include consistent research outputs (Selkrig et al., 2020). Phyllida Barlow (Godfrey, 2006) views how artist-teachers in HE chose to split their time as a dilemma, and Sangbin Im (Vella, 2016) comments on the same theme and states that as an artist-teacher in HE, he is seeking the perfect time balance between the two. A balance must be struck and time spent on art, as well as teaching, must be appreciated as there have been links made between time spent on art practice and perceived improvements in teaching and learning (Clews & Clews, 2010). However, the more demanding the teaching role is or becomes, the harder it is for the artist-teacher to sustain their art practice (Bickers, 2010). In extreme cases, the inability to balance time between two professional roles might see the artist-teacher stepping away from one of them such as in the case of Graham Crowley who left his teaching post in HE as he could not commit to doing both properly (Reardon, 2008). In less extreme cases, it might result in the artist-teacher having to adapt how they work (Vella, 2016). Artist-teachers in HE might commit to teaching one or two days a week or have intense periods of teaching and then take breaks away from it (Reardon, 2008).

## Teaching, learning and assessment

Artist-teacher identity also impacts, influences, and informs teaching, learning and assessment (TLA), with the published literature suggesting that artist-teachers embody a distinct pedagogical approach rooted in creative experimentation, risk-taking, and process-based learning (Graham & Zwirn, 2010), that is likely to differ from more traditional pedagogical approaches and, outcome-driven teaching models (Smith & Duckworth, 2022). Artist-teachers might go as far as to challenge traditional hierarchical models of education, fostering collaborative, practice-based learning environments where students see teachers as active practitioners (Atkinson, 2018). In this act, artist-teachers' artistic practices may not only influence, but enter into the classroom, to disrupt traditional teaching models and to allow for approaches that reshape the learning environment, making it more dynamic and responsive to creative exploration (Page, 2012), and to benefit student learning by providing first-hand insights into creative processes (Wild, 2022).

Additionally, artist-teacher pedagogies might focus on fostering student-centred, inquiry-led learning, critical thinking and personal expression rather than rigid instruction (Daichendt, 2010). This suggests that artist-teachers embed artistic methodologies into their teaching, influencing lesson planning, curriculum design, and classroom dynamics. An insecure dual artist-teacher identity may hinder this and instead lead to individuals conforming to pedagogical norms (Adams, 2007), while a secure dual identity is likely to allow for a deeper integration of artistic methodologies (Thornton, 2013). This tension may shape how assessment is approached, for instance, whether the artist-teacher prioritises predefined learning outcomes or individual interpretation process-oriented assessment that favours reflexivity, portfolio work, and creative risk-taking (Hall, 2010).

## Materials and methods

The research took a qualitative approach and made use of mixed methods (Denscombe, 2021). Two methods of data collection were used in this study: online interviews and online surveys. These methods were selected to provide both depth and breadth in understanding the hidden lives of artist-teachers in higher education in the UK. Data collection took place between October 2023 and December 2023. Interviews were chosen due to their ability to capture the nuanced, personal experiences of individual artist-teachers (Denscombe, 2021). Given that the focus of this study is on uncovering aspects of artist-teachers' professional and personal lives that are often unseen or unspoken within institutional settings, interviews provided a means to explore deeply personal narratives, emotions, and tacit knowledge. At the same time, online surveys were used to complement the interview data by capturing demographic data to help with analysis and highlight differences and similarities in participants' lives.

Each participant was invited to a single 30-minute semi-structured interview. Interviews took place online due to the geographical separation of participants. With permission, interviews were audio and video recorded and transcribed. Interviews were selected as the most appropriate method due to their ability to capture the deeply personal perspectives of individual artist-teachers, allowing for rich, in-depth insights into participants' experience, which is useful when exploring subjective meanings, personal experiences, and complex social phenomena (Denscombe, 2021), such as identity. The study made use of semi-structured interviewing, allowing answers to specific questions to be gained for comparison. Semi-structured interviews are also particularly effective for balancing depth with comparability across participants (Denscombe, 2021). Within the paper, interview extracts are used to illustrate points. Online surveys were hosted on Microsoft Forms and took place after the interview phase to collect further data from participants, including demographic data, to aid with data analysis.

The sample comprised self-identifying artist-teachers in HE in the UK. Participation was voluntary and participants self-selected to take part. Participants were recruited via social media platforms and invitations to participate were sent to higher education institutions (HEIs) that were identified as providing art courses.

Online interviews were undertaken with nine artist-teachers working in HE across the UK. Participants each came from a different HEIs. Six English regions are represented in this study. The South East and North West of England both had two participants, with the North East, East of England, South East, East Midlands, and London each represented once. Two participants work in specialist art universities, and seven worked in multi-disciplinary universities.

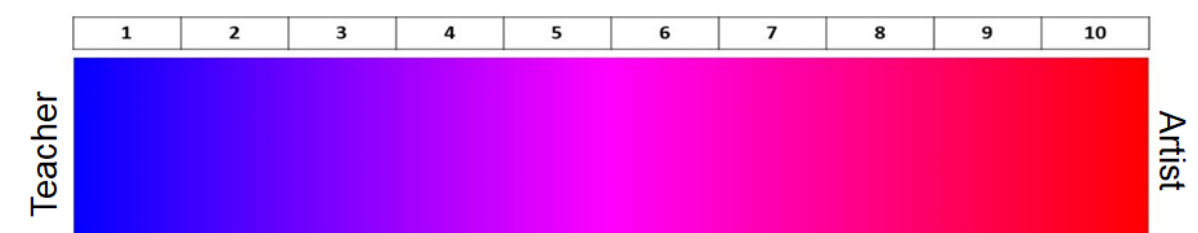
The online survey sample comprised six artist-teachers in HE participants. Participants were aged between 30-70 years, and all six participants identified as being white. Five participants identified as female and one as male.

Due to the methodological approach and small sample size, the results from this research are not aiming to be widely generalisable; instead, the research may resonate with artist-teachers working in similar higher education contexts (Denscombe, 2021).



## Interview schedule

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing participants to engage in a guided yet flexible discussion about their identities as artist-teachers in HE. The process combined both quantitative and qualitative elements, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the participants' experiences. Each interview included the completion of the Artist-Teacher Likert Scale (ATLS) (Figure 1), a tool designed to assess how participants position themselves within their dual identities as both artists and educators (Cairns, 2023). The ATLS was a central tool in this study, offering a structured means to quantify identity positioning. The ATLS helped visualise identity shifts and patterns across participants, and its inclusion provided an accessible entry point for discussion, allowing interviewees to reflect on their position before expanding on their experiences qualitatively.



**Figure 1.** The Artist-Teacher Likert Scale

To capture the depth and complexity of these identities, the engagement in the ATLS was followed by open-ended questions that encouraged participants to articulate their experiences, challenges, and reflections. Questions included are listed below and were asked with the aim of ensuring that participants had the opportunity to narrate their experiences beyond the constraints of the ATLS, making space for personal storytelling and reflection.

- How do you see yourself as an artist-teacher?
- How does working in higher education shape your dual practice?
- What are the biggest struggles you face in balancing these roles?
- What drives your practice as an artist-teacher?
- How do you see your identity evolving in the future?

## Positionality

The author of this paper is positioned as an artist-teacher working in adult community learning (ACL); their previous research is deeply rooted in an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that arise within this educational sector for those in the role and is documented in the author's PhD study (Cairns, 2023). One of the key recommendations from the PhD study was to extend this exploration beyond ACL to examine how artist-teachers navigate their roles in other educational sectors.

## Ethics

This research gained ethical approval through Norwich University of the Arts and University of the Arts London University Research Ethics procedures. Participant consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. Participants and their settings are anonymised to ensure that they are not identifiable in the results. This allows the potential for participants to be more open and possibly critical in their responses, whilst being protected.

## Results

### Artist-teacher in HE identity

Within interviews, artist-teacher participants were asked to place themselves on the ATLS (Figure 1). The ATLS was introduced to each participant prior to them placing themselves as a tool for considering artist-teacher identity as a continuum (Daichendt, 2009). Once participants had gained an understanding of the tool, they were asked to place their current and ideal artist-teacher identities onto the tool.

Nine participants placed their current identities and six also placed their ideal identities (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Artist-teacher participants ATLS results

	Current Identity	Ideal Identity
<b>ATinHE1</b>	8	10
<b>ATinHE2</b>	5.5	6
<b>ATinHE3</b>	7.5	7.5
<b>ATinHE4</b>	7	5
<b>ATinHE5</b>	6	8
<b>ATinHE6</b>	9	-
<b>ATinHE7</b>	7	-
<b>ATinHE8</b>	8	-
<b>ATinHE9</b>	9	10

Data analysis of the results is as follows; the mean current artist-teacher in HE identity on the ATLS was 7.4, the median 7.5, the range 3.5, and the mode(s) 8 and 9. While the mean ideal identity is 7.8, the median 7.75, the range 5, and the mode 10. Additionally, participants' reflections offered insights into the complexities of their identities within UK HE, helping to further reveal aspects of their hidden lives as artist-teachers. ATinHE2, who placed themselves between a 5 and a 6 on the ATLS, noted that their position has changed significantly over their 30-year career, stating:

I felt that this has been a scale, you know, and I could have placed myself on any probably any number 1 to 10. No, maybe not ever 10 in those 30 years. Yeah, maybe once, when I had time off to do, as I had a term sabbatical too, to finish some work for my PhD for my exhibition. Then maybe I felt like an artist then ... identity wise and in my head and in what's going on internally, I feel like I'm [...] an artist. (ATinHE2)

This extract starts to reveal the demands of teaching and how this can shift the balance away from a strong artist identity; ATinHE2 currently splits her time: two days teaching and two days in the studio. They also mentioned nuanced internal feelings and the importance of this to identity, indicating a potential discrepancy between external roles and internal position, a possible hidden tension in the lives of artist-teachers.

ATinHE4 initially said they would probably be a 7 or an 8, leaning towards 7 because of fluctuating phases, such as "summertime when we don't teach". This phrasing highlighted the impact of the academic calendar on artist-teachers identity, with teaching demands



influencing how strongly they felt like an artist at any given time. ATinHE4 revealed a finding of interest when they stated that their ideal identity was more a 5, explaining:

I think it's becoming a bit more apparent that I do become a better artist when I teach more actively, so I think I'd like to be more, more of a teacher. (ATinHE4)

This revealed a less obvious aspect: that for some, teaching can be a generative force for their artistic practice, challenging a simple dichotomy between the two roles, or that the teacher identity has only negative impacts on artist identity.

Within the online surveys, artist-teacher participants were also asked how they viewed themselves and how they wanted others to view them; as artists, teachers, or as a mix of both (Table 2). Six participants provided answers for both how they viewed themselves and how they wanted others to view them.

**Table 2.** Views on artist-teacher participant identity

	<b>How do you view yourself?</b>	<b>How do you want others to view you?</b>
<b>As an artist</b>	ATinHE6 ATinHE8	ATinHE5 ATinHE6 ATinHE8
<b>As a teacher</b>	-	-
<b>As a mix of both</b>	ATinHE2 ATinHE3 ATinHE4 ATinHE5	ATinHE2 ATinHE3 ATinHE4

Analysis of the data showed general consistency with the majority of those who saw themselves in one way also wanting others to see them in this same way. ATinHE5 was the one exception, as they saw themselves as a mix of both, but wanted others to see them as artists; this is consistent with their ATLS results, with their current identity sitting at a 6, quite centrally on the scale, and their ideal identity sitting at an 8, showing a desire to be more artist. Within interviews artist-teachers expanded on this theme. ATinHE5 discussed the differing perceptions of their professional identity from learners studying at different levels.

I think MA's [...]probably see myself a bit more hybrid, so ... the artist alongside the ... teacher, lecturer role ... From a BA perspective, I feel ... they see me as the teacher kind of figure, and I would doubt that many of them would think of the artist's perspective from us. (ATinHE5)

The extract demonstrated how the level of study and engagement might influence whether students view them more as an artist or a teacher and later add that to encourage learners all levels to view themselves as a mix of both, with highlight their artist experience to learners explicitly to make this identity more apparent. ATinHE6 had a strong sense of self as an artist but recognised varied external perceptions and also related this to the level of the learner, and despite placing themselves a “9 or even 10”, shared the assumption that undergraduates would view them as a “1 or a 2”.

Artist-teacher participants were also asked to provide their highest achieved qualifications in art and teaching (Table 3). Six participants provided their highest art qualification and five provided their highest teaching qualification.

**Table 3.** Artist-teacher participant qualifications and professional recognition

	<b>Art</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
<b>ATinHE1</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>ATinHE2</b>	PhD	Senior Fellow HEA
<b>ATinHE3</b>	Masters	Associate Fellow HEA
<b>ATinHE4</b>	Masters	PGCE
<b>ATinHE5</b>	Masters	Senior Fellow HEA
<b>ATinHE6</b>	PhD	n/a
<b>ATinHE7</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>ATinHE8</b>	Masters	PGCE
<b>ATinHE9</b>	n/a	n/a

All six participants who responded to the question held either an MA or PhD in their art specialism, showing some consistency across the group. The highest teacher qualifications were more varied. However, the majority of those who responded held professional recognition from the HEA (at different levels), rather than a recognised teaching qualification. Within interviews artist-teachers commented on the role of qualifications and professional recognition. ATinHE2 found that while completing their PhD their role and focus shifted and that they had less teaching responsibility. They also found that post-PhD they have been much more research active, showing the experience to have shifted their identity, roles, and responsibilities. ATinHE4 also talked on this theme and highlighted the increasing expectation for academics to have PhDs and industry experience and suggests that qualifications are becoming crucial for professional recognition and employment within HE. ATinHE4 gives an example of their colleagues being put on a PGCAP program (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) within three years of starting in their roles, for those without prior teaching qualifications.

### Definitions of artist-teachers in HE

Artist-teacher participants were asked to rank the following definitions from most to least applicable to their artist-teacher identity. Table 4 reflects the definitions rated most applicable by the six participants who responded to the question.

**Table 4.** Artist-teacher participation definition data: Most applicable

<b>Definition</b>	<b>ATinHE</b>
I am a master for learners to copy from (Daichendt, 2010)	-
I am an individual dedicated to the artistic development of students who does not necessarily practice as an artist (Thornton, 2003)	-
I am an individual who practises making art and teaching art and is dedicated to both activities as a practitioner (Thornton, 2013)	ATinHE3 ATinHE5 ATinHE8
I am an individual who parachutes into all manner of places and works with whomever they find to help them make their own art work (Jaffe <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	-

I am a dual citizen. A teacher during the day, at night a struggling artist (Graham & Rees 2014)	-
I am a professional artist with the competency needed to work in and through the arts in an educational and/or community setting (Ulvund, 2015)	ATinHE4 ATinHE6
I am a professional artist and teacher who is dedicated to both, and has the competencies needed to work in and through art and [HE] (Cairns, 2022)	AtinHE2

Analysis of the data shows some congruence with three participants selecting Thornton's (2013) definition of the artist-teacher and two selecting Ulvund's (2015) definition of the teaching-artist. Additionally, one participant selected Cairns' (2022) definition, originally used with artist-teachers in ACL. Participants were also asked to rank the least applicable definition, with the responses in Table 5 reflecting the choices of the same six artist-teachers.

**Table 5.** Artist-teacher participation definition data: Least applicable

Definition	ATinHE
I am a master for learners to copy from (Daichendt, 2010)	ATinHE2 ATinHE5
I am an individual dedicated to the artistic development of students who does not necessarily practice as an artist (Thornton, 2003)	ATinHE 6 ATinHE8
I am an individual who practises making art and teaching art and is dedicated to both activities as a practitioner (Thornton, 2013)	-
I am an individual who parachutes into all manner of places and works with whomever they find to help them make their own art work (Jaffe <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	ATinHE4
I am a dual citizen. A teacher during the day, at night a struggling artist (Graham & Rees 2014)	ATinHE3
I am a professional artist with the competency needed to work in and through the arts in an educational and/or community setting (Ulvund, 2015)	-
I am a professional artist and teacher who is dedicated to both, and has the competencies needed to work in and through art and [HE] (Cairns, 2022)	-

Analysis of least applicable also showed some congruence between participants with two selecting Daichendt's (2010) definition of the artist-educator and a further two selecting Thornton's (2003) definition of the teacher of art. Additionally, one participant selected Jaffe *et al.*'s (2013) definition of the teaching-artist and another Graham and Rees' (2014) definition of the artist teacher (unhyphenated). It should be noted that there was no crossover between most and least applicable definitions for participants, showing a degree of standardisation across participants.

### Artist-teachers and time

Artist-teacher participants were asked to share the average number of hours they spent on teaching and art practice each week and to state if they felt happy with this (Table 6). Six participants provided time averages and reflections for both teaching and art practice.

**Table 6.** Artist-teacher participant time

	<b>Time spent teaching</b>	<b>Happy?</b>	<b>Time spent on art practice</b>	<b>Happy?</b>
<b>ATinHE1</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>ATinHE2</b>	11–15	Yes	11–15	Yes
<b>ATinHE3</b>	5–10	No	31–35	No
<b>ATinHE4</b>	5–10	Maybe	5–10	No
<b>ATinHE5</b>	26–30	Maybe	5–10	No
<b>ATinHE6</b>	Less than 5	No	26–30	Maybe
<b>ATinHE7</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>ATinHE8</b>	11–15	Yes	21–25	Yes
<b>ATinHE9</b>	-	-	-	-

The two artist-teachers who stated they were unhappy with their teaching hours both shared a desire to increase their teaching hours. ATinHE5 was unsure if they were happy, but their reflection drew on other areas they wanted to invest more time in, including family life and research. The three artist-teachers who were unhappy with the time they spend on their art practice all stated that they would prefer to spend more time on their art practice; ideally, they would spend half their weeks on this activity. ATinHE6, who stated they were ‘maybe’ happy with the time they spent on their art practice, put this down to each week being different and balancing other activities such as writing.

## Discussion

Within the literature review, it was seen to be important for artist-teachers to identify with both their artist and teacher roles (Clews & Clews, 2010). Participant data found that 67% (n=4) of participants saw themselves as a mix of both artist and teacher identities and that 50% (n=3) also wanted others to see them in this way (Table 2). Daichendt (2009) suggests that artist-teacher identity is formed between the two poles of artist and teacher and that the dual identity exists on a continuum. The use of the ATLS with participants showed this to be true, with artist-teacher in HE participants holding identities on the artist-teacher continuum ranging from 5.5 slightly more ‘artist’ than ‘teacher’, to 9, much more ‘artist’ than ‘teacher’ (Table 1). Importantly, and in line with Daichendt’s work (2009), each of these artist-teachers still considered themselves to be engaged in the dual role. Thus, the range of responses highlighted how artist-teachers exist at any point between artist and teacher. Additionally, artist-teachers were able to place their ideal identities, which ranged from 5 to 10 on the ATLS, showing professional identity as changeable. Reardon’s (2008) interview participants also experienced the changing nature of the role, Honert reported that his identity changed depending on the context he found himself in, stating that “when I’m teaching, I’m not an artist [and] when I’m an artist, I’m not a teacher” (Reardon, 2008, p.219). Whereas Jung felt his identity shifted over time, rather than over context, as he reviewed and renewed his identity reflexively (Reardon, 2008). ATinHE8 reflected on similar themes to Honert and asserted that she kept her teaching and art (and teacher and artist identities) separate and engaged in them in two different locations, separated by a train journey. ATinHE4’s experience echoed Klaus, and the participant stated that their identity was in flux and that at certain times of the year they might feel more ‘teacher’ or more ‘artist.’ However,

for some art and teaching practices and artist and teacher identities are embedded within one another, including for historical artist-teacher Paul Klee who stated that he worked on his painting and course planning together, and that if he did not the dual identity would not work (Thornton, 2012). Contemporary artist-teacher Stybor (Vella, 2016) had the same experience as Klee and shared that this is what made her who she is. Interestingly, while ATinHE8 kept her two practices apart she still found that her art practice became embedded in her teaching practice.

Regardless of how the two identities coexist, the value of each must be respected. However, this was not always the case, with artist and teacher identities often pitted against each other in an 'either/or' rhetoric (Vella, 2016). For Craig-Martin (Reardon, 2008) it was important that we respect ourselves as both artists and teachers, if we want others to value both roles too. ATinHE4 recognises the value of teaching art in relation to her art practice and shared that she sometimes wants to be more of a teacher, to further help develop her art practice. Time and context might also influence which identity an artist-teacher focuses on, with Hannigan (Vella, 2016) outlining that she spent her twenties and thirties focusing predominantly on her artwork. Artist-teachers might experience a challenge in getting others to appreciate them as artists, due to the career choice they have made to be a dual professional (Vella, 2016), Kojela shared that art teachers are stigmatised. Im related this to myths around the relationship between the two identities and what each takes away from the other. Due to this, professional locations and their accompanying communities are important for artist-teachers and their identities. In her interview with Vella (2016), Stybor shared that the time she spent teaching in HE shaped her and completely changed her understanding of her own identity. ATinHE4 also shared in her interview that she was motivated by those she was surrounded by, be it her learners or her industry colleagues. ATinHE8 resonated with this and highlighted the importance of both her studio community and her HE colleague community, as both allowed her to share her passion and learn from others in the community (Selkrig et al., 2020). Im (Vella, 2016) suggested that it is wise to engage in HE communities, with learners or colleagues, as this is one way in which the artist-teacher can ensure that their teaching practice also benefits their art practice. In terms of a lived experience, ATinHE1 shared in her interview that she felt her relationship with her HE learners is transactional, and that she worked with them artist-to-artist rather than artist-to-learner, or teacher-to-learner. Bijl (Reardon, 2008) had a similar experience and shared that when teaching he liked to place himself as equal to his learners, and as someone who was able to offer help and advice. ATinHE3 also enjoyed sharing her knowledge with her HE learners and additionally felt that teaching gives her ideas for her own art; in this vein, Im (Vella, 2016) suggested that his teaching background was beneficial in the art studio as it better equipped him with the tools, he needed to create his work, in terms of critical perspectives. Artist-teacher identity and time is a recurring theme for those in HE, and ATinHE2 suggested that while the two identities complement each other, balancing time between them could be an issue. Im (Vella, 2016) concurred, stating that time is hard to control. Im went on to express a desire to cut their hours in HE by half to achieve, in their view, the perfect time balance between the two identities.

Others highlighted the importance of working economically in terms of how they spend their time, with Hannigan (Vella, 2016) stating that before she entered HE, she spent more time contemplating art, but since entering the sector she has needed to change her art practice due to time constraints. Despite time constraints, the published literature and

participant research has shown that engaging in HE teaching can be sustaining for the artist-teacher (Godfrey, 2006). Barlow (Godfrey, 2006) outlined that the income teaching in HE provides is sustaining and ATinHE5 stated the same. Both went on to share that art teaching sustains more than just financial needs, and ATinHE5 went as far to say that they would remain teaching in HE, albeit less, if they no longer needed to for financial reasons. Im (Vella, 2016) wrote on this topic, and highlighted the same themes as ATinHE5, and suggested that the belief that artists teach solely for financial gain is a common myth about the relationship between art practice and teaching. ATinHE9 agreed and stated that the relationship is also about the strength of the two identities coming together. While there is strength when the two identities come together, there can still be conflict between them. For participants ATinHE4 and ATinHE5, this conflict came from the admin related to teaching in HE and the time this takes up, rather than the act of teaching in HE itself. Mack (Vella, 2016) highlighted that this form of conflict is particularly difficult for those at the beginning of their teaching careers, as they came to terms with and learnt to juggle workloads associated with both art and teaching roles.

While many of Reardon's (2008) interviewees did not receive any formal art education this research showed that over a decade and a half on from this work, artist-teachers in HE are likely to be highly educated in their art specialism, with Thornton (2013) stating that within the UK an art qualification is often a prerequisite of employment. Im of South Korea also experienced this, with his artist colleagues who did not engage with formal art education suggesting to him that his art degree was for the benefit of securing a teaching position (Vella, 2016). In line with the published literature (Advance HE, 2023), teaching qualifications were less common, with 50% (n=3) of participants stating they had HEA recognition instead (Table 3). While there does not appear to be pressure for artist-teachers in HE to complete a teaching qualification, ATinHE2 shared that CPD activity usually focused on teaching and learning, rather than subject-specialist knowledge.

Despite the uneven nature of this CPD culture, artist-teacher in HE participants preferred definitions of their role that focused on duality. The two most selected definitions of artist-teachers, and similar terms, from the published literature for the artist-teacher in HE participants were Thornton's (2013) definition of the artist-teacher (n=3) and Ulvund's (2015) definition of the teaching-artist (n=2) (Table 4). These two definitions have several factors in common, but most importantly they both emphasis the duality of the artist-teacher role by having a focus on both art and teaching practice. Other key similarities included conveying a sense of professionalism attached to the dual role; an underlying commitment to art practice and teaching; the undertone that those in the role have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively in their roles; and the importance of the intersection between art practice and teaching. These points might link to how artist-teachers view themselves and want to be viewed by others (Table 2), with the majority of artist-teacher in HE participants viewing themselves as a 'mix of both' (67%), and half of the sample also wanting others to view them in this way. ATinHE6 articulated the lived experience of this, that showed perceived identity to be even more nuanced, as within her experience she found that first year degree students often perceive her as more teacher, while PhD students viewed her as more artist. The published literature also reminded us of the importance of context, and how this may differ between institutions, with the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Germany viewing Ganahl as an artist, and The National Collage of Art and Design in Dublin viewing Napier as a lecturer (Reardon, 2008).



Time, as well as context, was important for artist-teachers in HE, and those included in Reardon's 2008 book, 'Ch-ch-ch-changes: Artists Talk about Teaching', suggested that teaching one or two days a week is appropriate. The participants in this study also reflected this dictum, with 83% (n=5) teaching between less than 5 and 15 hours a week, on average, with just one artist-teacher in HE teaching more than this (Table 6), with 50% (n=3) of participants spending more than two days on their art practice. Within the published literature, questions about the teaching hours of artist-teachers in HE was not explicitly included in the interview schedules of Reardon (2008) and Vella (2016); however, analysis of the text revealed how some of the artist-teachers interviewed spent their time. Table 7 presents this data in comparison to how ATinHE participants describe how they spent their time. Im (Vella, 2016) and ATinHE5 shared that they were searching for the ideal state between art and teaching practice; for Im this was three days teaching a week, while for ATinHE5 the perfect balance was a 50/50 split between the two; however, this was not her reality, with the participant teaching four days a week (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Teaching days: ATinHE participant and published literature comparison

Teaching day(s)	ATinHE Participants	ATinHE from the published literature
1	-	Erwin Wurm (Reardon, 2008) Graham Crowley (Reardon, 2008) Iva Vodrazkova (Vella, 2016) Michael Craig-Martin (Reardon, 2008)
2	ATinHE4	Bjorn Melhus (Reardon, 2008) Flavia Pedrosa Vasconcelos (Vella, 2016) John Hilliard (Reardon, 2008)
2 1/2	ATinHE8	
3	ATinHE6	Sangbin Im (Vella, 2016)
4	ATinHE5	
5	ATinHE9	

## Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has revealed the hidden lives of artist-teachers in higher education (HE) in the UK. It has highlighted three key areas for those in the role; artist-teacher in HE identity, how those in the role are defined, and the impact of time in art and teaching professional locations on identity. To summarise, artist-teacher identity has been seen to be informed by time, context, and training. ATinHE participants have defined themselves in terms of duality, professionalism and commitment to both art and teaching.

In terms of teaching hours, a consensus seems to appear around the two-day-a-week mark, with John Hilliard (Reardon, 2008) describing this as very manageable. However, as the data in Table 7 suggests, what works best in terms of time will differ from artist-teacher to artist-teacher (Vella, 2016), and this paper recommends that artist-teachers in HE consider this in relation to how they can best balance their dual professional identity.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to express gratitude to the participants for their contributions and time, without which this study would not be possible.

## Declaration of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## References

- Adams, J. (2007). Artists becoming teachers: Expressions of identity transformation in a virtual forum. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 26(3), 264–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2007.00537.x>
- Advance HE. (2023). *Teaching and learning accreditation*. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/membership/teaching-and-learning-accreditation>
- Anderson, C. H. (1981). The identity crisis of the art educator: Artist? Teacher? Both? *Art Education*, 34(4), 45–46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3192553>
- Atkinson, D. (2018). *Art, disobedience, and ethics: The adventure of pedagogy*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62639-0>
- Bickers, P. (2010). Those who can, teach. *Art Monthly*, (335), 14. <https://www.artmonthly.co.uk/magazine/site/issue/april-2010>
- Brown, M., & Korzenik, D. (1993). *Art making and education: Disciplines in art education: Contexts of Understanding*. University of Illinois Press.
- Cairns, A. (2022). An interrogation into the need for a new definition for the artist-teacher in adult community learning. *The International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 41(4), 517–531. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12436>
- Cairns, A. (2023). Artist-teacher-researcher-student: Exploring the enterprises of the artist-teacher in adult community learning. *Journal of Research in Post Compulsory Education*, 28(2), 181–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2023.2206705>
- Clews, A., & Clews, D. (2010). And I also teach: The professional development of teaching creatives. *Journal of Arts & Communities*, 1(3), 265–278. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jaac.1.3.265\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jaac.1.3.265_1)
- Daichendt, G. J. (2009). Redefining the artist-teacher. *Journal of Art Education*, 62(5), 33–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2009.11519035>
- Daichendt, G. J. (2010). *Artist-teacher: A philosophy for creating and teaching*. Intellect. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv36xw1vs>
- Daichendt, G. J. (2011). The nineteenth-century artist-teacher: A case study of George Wallis and the creation of a new identity. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 30(1), 71–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2011.01673.x>
- Denscombe, M. (2021). *The good research guide: For small-scale research projects* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Open University Press.
- Godfrey, M. (2006). *Interviews: Learning experience*. Frieze. <https://www.frieze.com/article/art-schools-phyllida-barlow>
- Graham, M., & Rees, J. (2014). Pick-up sticks art teacher-interconnectedness and fragility: Pedagogy as an artistic encounter. *Teaching Artist Journal*, 12(1), 15–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15411796.2014.844625>
- Graham, G. A., & Zwirn, S. G. (2010). How being a teaching artist can influence K-12 art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 51(3), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2010.11518804>

Hall, J. (2010). Making art, teaching art, learning art: Exploring the concept of the artist teacher. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 29(2), 103–110. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2010.01636.x>

Hoekstra, M. (2018). Artist teachers and democratic pedagogy [Doctoral dissertation, University of Chester, United Kingdom].

Jaffe, N., Barniskis, B., & Hackett Cox, B. (2013). *Teaching artist handbook*. Chicago.

National Careers Service. (no date). *Higher education lecturer*. <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/higher-education-lecturer>

Office for Students (OfS). (2022). Regulating higher education in England. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/regulatory-resources/the-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>

Page, T. (2012). A shared place of discovery and creativity: Practices of contemporary art and design pedagogy. *International Journal for Art and Design Education*, 31(1), 67–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2012.01732.x>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). (2023). *Higher education in the UK*. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/qaa-strategy-2023-27#Reardon>, J. (2008). *Ch-ch-ch-changes: Artists talk about teaching*. Ridinghouse.

Selkrig, M., Smith, K., & McMahon, M. (2020). Art educators' professional learning: Reflecting together to consider ontologies of quality in praxis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 88, 102963. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102963>

Smith, R., & Duckworth, V. (2022). *Transformative teaching and learning in further education: Pedagogies of hope and social justice*. Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447362326.001.0001>

Thornton, A. (2003). *Educating the artist teacher*. Anglia Polytechnic University.

Thornton, A. (2012). What is it to be an artist teacher in England today? *World Journal of Education*, 2(6), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v2n6p39>

Thornton, A. (2013). *Artist, researcher, teacher: A study of professional identity in art and education*. University of Chicago Press.

Ulvund, M. (2015). In the age of the teaching artist: What teaching artists are and do. *InFormation*, 4(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.7577/if.v4i1.1369>

Vella, R. (2016). *Artist-Teachers in Context: International Dialogues*. Brill | Sense (Doing Arts Thinking: Arts Practice, Research and Education).

Wild, C. (2022). *Artist-teacher practice and the expectation of an aesthetic life: Creative being in the neoliberal classroom*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003285755>